

# To What Extent Does Excessive Addiction to Short Videos Affect Teenagers' Mental Health?

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**Abstract.** With the update and iteration of network technology, multimedia technology and mobile equipment, the short video industry has developed rapidly and has become the most used network product in the society. It has the characteristics of visualization, fragmentation and facilitation, so that when teenagers need a short rest, they cannot consciously turn on their mobile phones to watch short videos. Over time, they may be immersed in it and enjoy the pleasant leisure and rich knowledge brought by short videos. However, the popularity of short videos has also led to some problems, including overindulgence, easy access to bad information and threats to online security. Through in-depth research and analysis of relevant literature and data, as well as understanding of adolescent mental health, the author finds that over-indulgence in short videos has affected adolescent mental health to a certain extent, such as addiction, distraction, social isolation and other problems. Therefore, targeted suggestions and countermeasures are put forward to guide young people to use short videos rationally. Including personal self-management, family and school education, short video platform supervision and other aspects of measures to reduce teenagers' excessive addiction to short video behavior, in order to promote the healthy growth of teenagers, call on all sectors of society to pay attention to teenagers' excessive addiction to short video may bring mental health problems, promote social attention to this problem and solve.

**Keywords:** short video, mental health, teenagers

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## 1. Introduction

Short videos, as a popular social media product, attract users of different ages. According to the 52nd Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China (2023) released by the China Internet Network Information Center, As of August 2023, the number of short video users continues to grow, and the number of online video users is 1.044 billion, accounting for 96.8% of the total Internet users; The number of short video users is 1,02.6 billion, accounting for 95.2% of the total netizens. Survey data shows that as of March 2022, short video users are using 132 minutes per day, an increase of 7 minutes from last year. Among them, 56.2% of users watch short videos every day. Compared with the previous data, the popularity and user base of short videos continue to expand, and the duration of user use has also increased [47].

With the development of short videos over the years, it can be said that short videos have become an indispensable part of teenagers' lives. It covers a variety of topics such as life, entertainment, movies, music, games and society. Through reasonable function Settings, personalized recommendations and rich content, attract young people's attention, increase their dependence on short video platforms, and improve their use and activity of short media [32]. However, excessive addiction to short videos has brought a series of adverse consequences such as decreased sleep quality, reduced social time, and distraction, which has brought many troubles to teenagers' study, life and mental health [25]. In addition, with the continuous update of Internet technology, the rapid rise of short video platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou, watermelon video, wechat, Weibo and XiaoHongshu, and users' behavior of watching short videos is more common. These platforms are rich in resources, rich in content and increasingly perfect in function. They have won the love of teenagers for their short length and wonderful content. It is of practical significance to study the influencing factors of adolescent overindulgence, hoping to promote the positive development of adolescent health psychology, guide them to correctly use short videos, establish correct values, and improve their information literacy and overall knowledge literacy [1].

Explore the influencing factors of teenagers' excessive use of short videos through a large number of literature resources, and propose corresponding measures: From the perspective of teenagers themselves, they need to improve their self-management ability, arrange time reasonably, and avoid excessive use of short videos; Schools and families should strengthen the education

and supervision of students, carry out related mental health education courses, help students correctly understand the advantages and disadvantages of short videos, and cultivate students' healthy online habits; In terms of social environment, enhance teenagers' network cognitive ability and ease their dependence and addiction on short video use; In terms of short video platforms, content review should be strengthened, harmful information dissemination should be restricted, user privacy protection should be strengthened, and students' network security should be guaranteed [38].

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. What is Short Video Addiction?

Currently, mainstream media platforms limit the length of short videos to 57 seconds to 5 minutes, and through short videos ranging from a few seconds to a few minutes, users can get content related to culture, music, movies, food, fitness and other fields [35]. Short video is a new symbol of information dissemination. Its development benefits from the growing maturity of the Internet and the rapid rise of major short video platforms at home and abroad. It is characterized by long time, low production cost, rich production content, strong originality and high user engagement, and its communication environment depends on different new media platforms, such as TikTok and Kuaishou (Yang, 2020). Users can browse short videos anytime and anywhere through their mobile terminals, gaining knowledge in different fields while also gaining physical and mental pleasure. Since the use of short videos requires dependence on the Internet, then short video addiction is also a way to overuse the Internet. Short video addiction refers to out-of-control Internet behavior, which is specifically reflected in the obvious social psychological disorder caused by excessive use of the Internet [24]. Peele [31] believes that overuse behavior is essentially an addictive behavior, which is related to unhealthy lifestyle, personal habits and the surrounding environment. Many scholars have studied short video addiction, and its measurement indicators mainly measure the degree of user overuse from the aspects of user motivation, psychological factors, personal characteristics, social environment, etc. The results of the scale test can be used as the basis for empirical research, so it has high rigor and universality [2].

### 2.2. How to Define Mental Health?

The traditional view of mental health defines an individual's mental health as the absence of psychopathological symptoms [10]. This traditional approach views an individual's mental health problems and mental health as two ends of a line, and assumes that mental health stems from an individual not having mental health problems [50]. Although understanding the causes of mental health problems is important for understanding and improving mental health, traditional research perspectives not only limit the understanding of mental health, but also lead individuals to hold a narrow view of how to cope with adversity and understand the concept of mental health [11]. Researchers have found that mental health issues have become the leading cause of illness disorders in 15–19-year-olds globally, accounting for up to 45% [29]. Therefore, based on the current situation of high incidence of adolescent mental health problems, further combing the current manifestations of adolescent mental health and subjective well-being will help us to understand the current situation of adolescent mental health more comprehensively.

Therefore, based on the definition of the World Health Organization and the two-factor model of mental health, this study defines mental health as having no symptoms of mental illness, having good mental function, and being in a positive and happy mental state (WHO, 2004).

### 2.3. The Influence Factors of Short Video Addiction at Individual Level

At the individual level, it mainly includes personal use motivation, personal personality characteristics, emotional experience and so on. The motivation of using short videos is the main factor that leads users to show different usage behaviors, such as information acquisition, entertainment and relaxation through watching short videos, and escapism. Yu et al. [46] analyzed the relationship between motivation and behavior of short video users, and believed that information attraction was the main motivation for their use. Based on the theoretical research of grounding, Guan Shengliang [12] believes that personal information needs, value needs and emotional needs are the main influencing factors for users to use mobile short video. According to Liang Xubin et al. [23], through questionnaire survey and structural equation modeling, user entertainment and social motivation are the main motivations that affect social media usage habits, and mobile social media habits further affect social media addiction behaviors.

Personality characteristics such as gender, age, personality and ability to cope with stress can affect Internet use behavior. Munno [28] believes that by studying the causes of individual addiction, individual personality traits, such as emotional instability, low self-esteem, family and school, will lead to different degrees of Internet addiction; Servidio [33] took Italian college students as an example and found that personality traits such as agreeableness and extroversion were significantly negatively correlated with Internet addiction, while openness was positively correlated with Internet addiction. Guo Shunqing [13] and other scholars analyzed the current situation of Internet overuse of middle school students in Shanghai, and concluded that middle school students are high-risk groups of Internet overuse, and students in vocational schools are the most serious ones. Boys are more likely to

overuse the Internet, so measures can be taken to prevent overuse of the Internet, such as controlling the online time and strengthening the awareness of Internet use education.

Emotional experience is a key factor in studying Internet overuse. Bai Xiaoli et al. [18] believe that social anxiety will affect college students' preference for using social networks, thus leading them to overuse the Internet. According to Bao Wulijiang et al. [4], the higher the satisfaction of college students' psychological needs on the Internet, the more likely they are to have Internet overuse behaviors, which can be improved by improving their self-motivation in using online social media. Jiang Yongzhi et al. [4] believe that the low time efficiency of college students will lead to excessive use of the Internet, and by improving their time efficiency and reducing their sense of pressure, they can reduce their excessive use of the mobile Internet.

#### 2.4. The Influence of Short Video and Other Electronic Media on Adolescent Mental Health

In recent years, with the continuous development of technology, the phenomenon of excessive use of electronic media such as computers and mobile phones by individuals has become increasingly serious. Excessive use of these web-based electronic media can lead to a range of physical and psychological problems, such as poor concentration and low mood, and for short video addicts, spending a lot of time on social networks can affect their interpersonal relationships in real life. Reducing opportunities for normal communication with others in real life can lead to disconnection from real life relationships. Studies have shown that excessive use of social media can reduce sleep time, which in turn affects the quality of sleep. In addition, excessive use of social media will not only affect sleep, but also lead to visual impairment, head and neck pain, as well as loneliness, anxiety, depression and other emotions [41]. In a survey of Chinese wechat users, Yang Lijuan [45] found that excessive use of wechat would have a significant negative impact on life satisfaction. Research on the overuse of short videos has also found that it can cause individual self-objectification and reduce physical satisfaction [12]. Zheng Xiabing (2014) found that excessive use of mobile social networks would lead to technical job conflicts, which would have a negative impact on job performance. It is found that young people's excessive use of social networks will influence online impulse consumption through the mediating effect of money attitude. Kushlev [21] found that cellphone beeping can lead to poor concentration in people who use their phones excessively. Some scholars found that when mobile phones ring or vibrate, individuals are more likely to focus their attention on the information prompts of mobile phones [5]. Jingwei et al. [19] found in a study that overuse of smart phones can lead to significant impairment of inhibitory function. Causing individuals to experience more conflict in the early stages of the inhibition process. Wang Haibin et al. [37] found that excessive use of mobile phones has poor inhibition control ability through the study of stop signal paradigm. Wang Qingchun et al. [40] found through eye tracking technology that college students with mobile phone addiction showed attention alertness to mobile phone-related stimuli. Crone [8] found that excessive use of social media can affect the normal development of the user's brain, thus weakening attention, memory, and learning ability.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Social Cognitive Theory

In the late 1970s, American psychologist Albert Bandura (1986) proposed the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) based on cognitive psychology, which believed that there was an interaction between human cognition, external environment and behavior. The theory that when the external environment changes, cognitive functions respond and adjust behavior to accommodate this change is often used to explain problematic usage behavior. Short video because of its strong entertainment value, can have a strong appeal to individuals, thus affecting its internal factors, with the popularity of short video applications, many people are using them, which also affects the individual's external environment, addiction to short video belongs to the problem of Internet use. Therefore, this study chooses social cognitive theory as the theoretical basis of short video addiction.

According to psychology, the most important factor in Internet addiction behavior is the cognitive problem of individual factors, which mainly includes information literacy, self-control, emotional experience, use motivation, personality characteristics, etc. Short video addiction behavior can also be regarded as a kind of problematic individual behavior. Through the ternary interaction model, the influencing factors of this kind of behavior can be explained well, including personal influencing factors, environmental influencing factors and behavioral influencing factors. At present, some scholars have studied the causes of addictive short video behavior from the perspective of social cognitive theory.

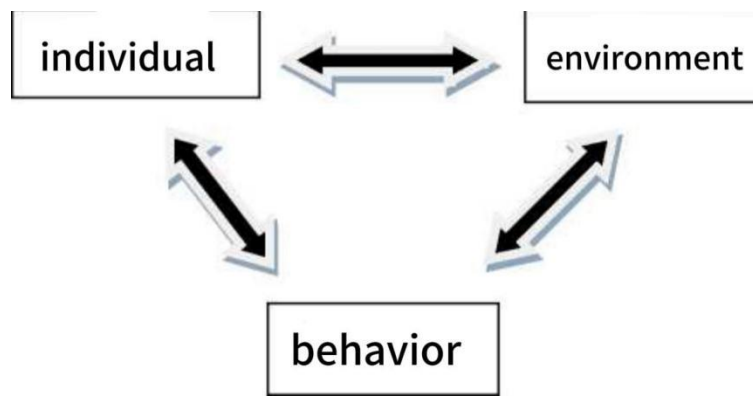


Figure 1. ternary interaction model

### 3.2. Use and Satisfaction Theory

Elihu Katz proposed the concept of "use and satisfaction" for the first time in 1959, and Katz (1974) proposed the theory of "use and satisfaction", which pointed out that individuals would use mobile network media to fulfill their needs. It mainly includes: cognitive satisfaction, that is, users will experience a sense of satisfaction after obtaining information through the Internet; Emotional satisfaction refers to the pleasure and satisfaction that users experience when using online applications; The satisfaction of social integration is that users can easily connect with family and friends through the Internet; The satisfaction of relieving pressure refers to the satisfaction generated by the use of media to release pressure and relax [9]. Usage and satisfaction theory has been used repeatedly in social media use research and has been cited as the reason why users continue to use social media. According to a large number of studies, short video addiction mainly satisfies the diversified, personalized and entertainmentized needs of individuals, thus generating satisfaction. Short video addiction behavior conforms to the connotation of this theory, so this theory is chosen as the theoretical basis for short video excessive addiction.

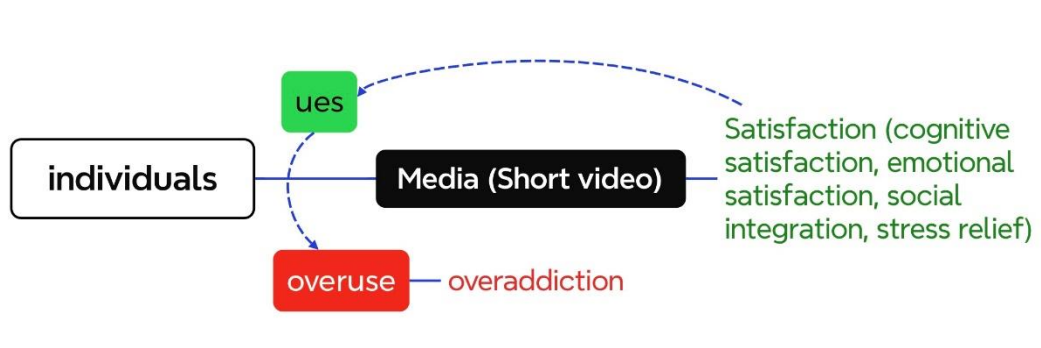


Figure 2. Use and satisfaction theory for short video addiction

## 4. Results: The Negative Effects of Short Video Addiction on Adolescent Mental Health

Although short videos bring joy and relaxation to teenagers, this study shows that overindulgence in short videos will bring negative effects on teenagers' mental health. This study will focus on what negative effects overindulgence in short videos will bring to teenagers' mental health.

### 4.1. Affect the Quality of Sleep

Studies have shown that indulging in short videos may also affect teenagers' sleep quality, which in turn affects their attention and cognitive abilities. The biggest negative effects of social media addiction are taking away users' daily time, shortening their sleep time and affecting their sleep quality. According to the 2022 Short Video User Value Research Report (CSM, 2023), nearly 60% of users choose to watch short videos before going to bed, and 40% choose to watch short videos during lunch breaks. This undoubtedly greatly shortened their sleep rest time. Browsing videos can become more and more exciting, leading to delayed sleep. According to the "China Sleep Research Report 2022" [39], looking at mobile phones or surfing the Internet is an important factor affecting the sleep problems of contemporary teenagers, 89% of teenagers are addicted to playing games or watching short videos

on mobile phones before going to bed. Heavy use of smartphones and other media by adolescents leads to chronic sleep deprivation with adverse effects on cognitive ability, academic performance, and social-emotional functioning [14]. Long-term viewing of short videos can also have an impact on sleep quality. The stimulating content or the stimulating plot of a short video can stimulate the nervous system of teenagers after watching it, making it difficult for them to relax and fall asleep. In addition, staring at the phone screen for a long time can also stimulate the visual nerve and affect the quality of sleep. Lack of sleep and poor sleep quality can lead to problems such as poor concentration, memory loss and mood swings in teenagers during the day, seriously affecting their study and life.

#### 4.2. Decreased Self-perception

The fast pace and fragmented content of short videos can easily make teenagers dependent, making it difficult for them to stay focused for long periods of time. Current scholars mainly focus on the cognitive thinking problems generated by social media, taking teenagers as research objects. Due to young people's immature psychological development and limited self-control, social media is filled with a large number of false information, violent videos, pornographic pictures and other extreme content, such as animal abuse and extreme thoughts, which will have a negative impact on young people's cognitive thinking, leading them to be addicted to the Internet, affecting their academic, physical and mental health. Secondly, the content in short videos is often edited and embellished, which may bring unhealthy self-awareness to teenagers. In short videos, much of the content is carefully curated and produced, showing the fake and good life [6]. This can lead to adolescents making unhealthy comparisons and judgments about their body shape, appearance, etc. with others, leading to a biased view of themselves and affecting their confidence and self-esteem.

#### 4.3. Decreased Self-control

Short video addiction can make teenagers feel empty, anxious and lonely, leading to a decline in self-control. This is a matter of great concern. With the rise of short video platforms, more and more teenagers are addicted to short videos, unable to extricate themselves, and sometimes experience obvious mood swings. This addiction to short videos not only affects their study and life, but also has a negative impact on their self-control ability. The content of short videos is usually designed to be attractive and stimulating, and it is easy to arouse teenagers' strong curiosity and interest, leading to their addiction and inability to extricate themselves [48]. Being immersed in short videos for a long time will gradually cause teenagers to lose control of their time, affecting their work mode and learning efficiency. Over time, teens may gradually lose control of their behavior and rely more and more on short videos for pleasure and satisfaction. This dependence can make them unable to control their own behavior independently, leaving them vulnerable to external temptations and unable to extricate themselves. When faced with other important tasks or temptations, they may make bad decisions due to lack of self-control, which affects their own development and growth.

### 5. Discussion

#### 5.1. What Positive Effects do Short Videos Have on Teenagers?

Short video has penetrated into People's Daily life and occupies an indispensable and important position. This raises the question: Why do short videos have such universal appeal? Although many studies have shown that short video addiction can lead to anxiety and depression in people, there are also many studies that show positive effects.

##### 5.1.1. Quick Access to Information

Short video content is rich and diverse, involving politics, economy, culture, history, film and television and other fields. They update in time, keep up with the current hot topics, and become one of the important ways for users to obtain information. Different from a single text message, short videos can interpret the information users want to express from multiple angles, such as sound, images, animation effects, and video scenes. This enables users to obtain the required information more intuitively, more deeply and more accurately, greatly improving the information acquisition rate, and meeting the information acquisition needs of users when using short videos. Teenagers obtain current affairs information, movie and TV drama information and cultural knowledge by watching short videos to meet their information acquisition needs. When this need is met, it will encourage them to continue using this method to obtain information, thereby increasing the intensity of use of short videos, leading to a process from sustained use to addiction.

### 5.1.2. Meet Entertainment and Relaxation

The entertainment function of short video is one of its characteristics, and it is also the main factor to attract users to watch short video. Users get satisfaction through the entertainment brought by social media, so as to achieve the purpose of entertainment and relaxation. According to the 2022 Short Video User Value Research Report, 42.6 percent of Internet users choose to watch short videos as the "only" way for leisure and entertainment. The pressure of study, work and life makes people in a highly depressed state, while the emergence of short videos just makes people relax themselves better in a limited time [16]. Different short video platforms have different entertainment functions, such as Tiktok's characteristic filter props, special effects video functions, and Kuaishou's video mixing and cutting functions, so that users can make personalized short videos to achieve the purpose of entertainment and relaxation. The fragmented e-commerce mode of short videos, humorous content and ways of participating in self-entertainment enrich users' entertainment and leisure life [36]. The greater the sense of entertainment and relaxation that teenagers experience through watching short videos, the more likely they are to become overly addicted.

### 5.1.3. Diversity of Social Interactions

Short video platform with comments, forward, like, chat and other functions. Through these features, users can achieve social interaction with others. Secondly, the platform's dating recommendation, numerous theme activities, and acquaintance circle recommendation have been recognized by nearly 30% of users, and the social attributes of the short video platform have been recognized. Teenagers follow their friends or favorite bloggers through short video platforms, interact with friends, share videos, and meet like-minded netizens through short videos to meet their social needs. The more obvious the social interaction adolescents achieve through watching short videos, the more likely they are to develop addictive behaviors (Yang, 2020).

## 5.2. Addiction to Short Videos Can Worsen Depression and Anxiety in Teenagers

Although short video use can have certain positive effects on teens, much of the existing research on social media and its effects on users revolves around its negative effects. For example, studies on the relationship between short videos and anxiety have found that the shorter videos they use daily, the worse their anxiety symptoms are and the higher their likelihood of having an anxiety disorder. People who spend more time on short videos each day experience greater psychological stress, including anxiety and depression [34]. Short videos provide convenience for communication and expression among teenage users, but at the same time, they also cause psychological anxiety. Anxiety about using short videos has even become a common state for teenage users. Research on the use of WeChat by adolescent users shows that the longer they use WeChat, the more likely they are to have anxiety [15]. There is also a strong relationship between social media use, problematic cell phone use, and depressive tendencies, and in the teen population, people with depressive tendencies tend to use mobile social media to alleviate this negative mood, making them more likely to trigger problematic cell phone use behaviors. Mobile social media plays a mediating role between depression and problematic mobile phone use behaviors [20]. Teen users also show some of the psychiatric symptoms of addiction to short videos, and one study found that teen users with borderline personalities centered on depression were more dependent on social media use than the normal population, The most powerful predictor of mobile social media short video use and Internet addiction was depressive symptoms [27]. One of the most prominent risk factors linking short video use to anxiety and depression is frequent social comparisons, which is the psychological mechanism this study focused on.

### 5.3. How to Deal with Teen Short Video Addiction?

For teenagers who are excessively addicted to short videos, it shows that they have low resistance to the temptation of instant gratification, and they want to obtain short-term psychological entertainment to avoid stress and paralyze themselves. As a product of mass socialization, short videos have certain advantages. Proper use and effective use of short videos are conducive to promoting one's own development, understanding the latest development in the field of interest, and promoting the relationship between friends and classmates. In order to make full use of the advantages of short video and eliminate the negative effects of short video, it is very necessary to enhance the control and time management ability of teenagers from the subjective consciousness. Families should play the role of supervision, pay attention to communication with children, understand the needs of children, and provide appropriate supervision and guidance; Schools should set up courses and activities for guidance, strengthen students' awareness of network security, make teenagers realize the harm caused by short video addiction, provide some healthy and positive content to guide students, and cultivate their independent decision-making ability. Short video platforms should strengthen the protection mode for teenagers, restrict minors to use short videos within a specific period of time, and only see some beneficial and positive content, to prevent violent and vulgar videos from appearing in the scope of minors can see. In addition, the platform can also use big data algorithms to recommend quality content, thereby guiding teenagers to watch positive and beneficial videos. Teenagers themselves should find reasonable ways to relax, improve their control ability, rationally arrange the time to use short videos every day, cultivate some other interests and hobbies, and reduce their dependence on short videos. For example, you can set a clear schedule to manage the use of short video software, and avoid touching the phone as much as possible during study and work to

obtain short breaks. Try to separate study time from leisure time to gradually reduce the use of short videos. It is also possible to set up a reward program in exchange for the use of short video platforms, and gradually overcome possible addictive habits through self-discipline and ability improvement. Finally, you can also consider other ways to replace the use of short video leisure time, and find easier entertainment and relaxation for the body and mind, exercise the body, in order to cultivate a good habit of using short video, resist the bad temptation of short video, and use short video scientifically and moderately.

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, the popularity of mobile short video applications has not decreased, the number of users and per capita usage time have increased year by year, and the problem of short video addiction has also attracted attention. Previous studies mostly focused on the communication mechanism and user experience of short video. Therefore, starting from the impact of short video addiction on adolescent mental health, this study compared the previous research on Internet addiction, and mainly discussed the negative impact of short video addiction on adolescent mental health.

Studies have shown that addiction to short videos significantly increases the risk of depression in adolescents and can lead to problems such as poor concentration and decreased academic performance. In addition, the content published on the short video platform is very attractive, which is easy to deepen the dependence of young people on short videos, thus affecting their daily life and mental health level. Although short videos can meet teenagers' entertainment needs, access to information, and daily social interaction to a certain extent, prolonged viewing can have negative effects on their mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and other psychological problems. These psychological problems not only affect the study and life of teenagers, but also may lead to short-term memory loss. Therefore, it is necessary to use the multiple forces of schools, families, short video platforms and teenagers themselves to jointly resist its negative effects, regulate the rational use of short videos, and reduce the adverse effects that long-term overuse of mobile short videos may have on the mental health of teenagers.

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